

REFERÊNCIA:

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DISTURBING BEHAVIOUR BY PARTURIENT COW DELAYS THE INGESTION OF COLOSTRUM BY NEWBORN CALF.

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As soon as calves are born, cows usually initiate a contact with them, smelling and licking them intensively during the first hours after calving. It is well known that these behaviours provide the opportunity for mutual recognition between cow and her offspring. Besides that this contact has important effects on calf behaviour, stimulating it to stand up, to seek for teats and to suckle. However, in some cases cows might confuse the calves during their attempts to suckle; kicking, butting and presenting movements that difficult the calves' access to the teats. In order to evaluate the frequency and effects these disturbing behaviours, 124 cows of two breeds (Nelore=89 and Guzerat =35) were observed. Direct and continuous observations were done using the focal sampling method. The following variable were measured: latency from birth to seeking teats (LST= measured from birth until the calf was stood up, moving snout around cow's body, seeking teats, without touching the udder); time between the first movements around the cow's body and the beginning of suckling attempts (TSA=measure from the beginning of seeking teats until the calf presented the first contact with the udder, trying to get the teats into its mouth), and time between the first contact with the udder and suckling initiation (TSU= measured from the first suckling attempts to the first suckling). The statistical analyses were performed using one-way ANOVA, comparing those animals that presented disturbing behaviours (N=20 for Nelore and 11 for Guzerat) with those that did not. There were statistical differences for TSA in both breeds, with the disturbing cows group presenting higher means (Nelore= 21.50 ± 20.42 minutes and Guzerat= 67.77 ± 57.15 minutes) than the non-disturbing group (Nelore= 9.51 ± 10.60 minutes and Guzerat= 12.37 ± 19.98 minutes). There were no statistical differences for LST and TSU. By these results we conclude that cows presented the disturbing behaviours when calves tried to suckle, probably due to udder sensitivity. As long as cows avoid the calves approaching, the immunity of the newborn may be injured, since the ingesting colostrum will be delayed.

Index Terms: maternal behavior, beef cattle, colostrum ingestion